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THE MAGIC MEDICINE OF THE HOTTENTOTS.

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Abstract.

753 755 757 Graevenbroeck (1685) and Kolben (1736), who is supposed to have copied most of his information from the first named, both give interesting accounts of the manners and methods of the Hottentot Medicine Man. There was evidently a classification, such as still exists in S.W. Africa and Namaqualand, of disease into minor and major troubles. Minor sicknesses were treated by the herbalists; in the major diseases the first step [787] was consultation with the witch doctor. Divination by examination of the entrails of a slaughtered animal was used. [562] There were distinct differences in the treatment of women and men. Much of the treatment was mere trickery such as sucking with the mouth of pieces of bone out of the back, and other such methods in which sleight of hand was useful.

755 All of the old observers from Graevenbroeck to Campbell in 1815, corroborate the noise cure, that is, that after medicines had failed, the patient was shaken, reproached for his intention of leaving this world by fair speeches and foul, and was thumped to keep life in him while the many helpers shrieked and howled. If he died during treatment, the noise was redoubled. After recovery an andersmaken or transition rite was undergone by the fortunate patient.

164 [171] [846] 757 After the advent of the white man, small pox, measles and less cleanly illnesses swept the country like plagues. Previous to the new comers' appearance, the common diseases were sore breasts, ophthalmias and umbilical hernias, the last named due to the use of fat on the new born baby's umbilical cord which retarded drying. Coughs appear to have been common, but there are no ancient Hottentot remedies for rheumatism, venereal disease, or tuberculosis; those for the last two diseases are of quite recent origin. Those used for phthisis are used on the score of analogy; the chief symptom is a cough, therefore, those remedies used for simple coughs are given. For the wasting of advanced tubercular disease there is to-day one outstanding [824] item, Kattendoorn root, the roots of which spread out horizontally beneath the surface of the ground, as do the veins beneath the skin of a muscular man. Therefore, it must, by Hottentot

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argument, be a good " blood giver." This is an instance of the modern application of ancient sympathetic method.

The further information here gathered together, represents the work of four years' questioning, checking, and corroborating statements made by many herbalists, not a few of whom were also practitioners of witchcraft, that is, practitioners of major qualifications. One took four bottles of water mixed with earth and the ground remains of a certain little red-headed hornet that builds in houses and huts. Before rising each morning he drank a mouthful of the suspension. On the fifth day of this treatment; " there lay the sick people—and there lay the medicines. And now pressed the new power between the shoulders." Here, perhaps, is some small relic of the initiation of a man into the cult of P/gai* aup.

Only occasionally is there a little resemblance between the herbs used by the Native and those of the modern occidental pharmacopoeia. Yet there is a sufficient similarity between them to cause the scoffer to cease his scoffing, and realise that here, after all, lies the root and origin of modern medicine—modern scientific medicine which owes at least one of its drugs to this ancient Hottentot herbal, namely, Buchu. The bitter roots are similar in appearance on cross section, colour of infusion, taste, and action to the Radix Calumbae of modern pharmacy. But, with this one exception, there is no commercial future for any other item. The quantity of most of the herbs and medicinal bushes in the country is but small.

Red substances are used in anaemias and weaknesses, and repeated doses are given during fevers. They are used, several authorities state, because they are red and the blood is red, and therefore they strengthen the blood, and, of course, when grown on red ground, their value as drugs is increased enormously. All such red materials when used and finished with must be disposed of carefully, because good stuff must never be thrown away. Rooi wortle, for weaknesses, Baboon's ear, the Kalkoen bloom. Rooi rainkie, are examples, and in each the reason for use is their colour, and, should they grow in red ground, they must be good. The same principle is expressed in the use of the dark lichen which grows on almost all granite outcrops in Namaqualand, which is used in decoction as a mouth-wash for teething.

Barend makes young people's medicine as the moon grows during the first days of the month, and never prepares any when the moon is on the wane. Yet he always examines cut sections of roots to see if they come from poor ground. He evidently works on a combination of " scientific " and " sympathetic " lines. The same medicine prepared in a different manner may have a different action. Thus, if black root be cut in an upward

*For ease in printing and reading I have denoted the clicks thus :—D/ the dental; P/ the palatal; C/ the cerebral; L/ the lateral and X/ the guttural.

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direction it will act as an emetic; should it be cut downwards it is transformed into a purgative. The Fleer-boom, also, is used in this manner. Purgatives have a strange fascination for the Native, and for pains in the stomach or "fevers" they have been used to "work them out," that is, a tangible removal must always, they argue, be productive of good, for they firmly believe that whatever they suffer is caused by a tangible something.

Rule of thumb methods prevailed in treatment, and the lore was handed down from father to son. In the beginning, man noticed that when he awakened in the morning he felt at his best, worked, or hunted better than later in the day; slackened and grew tired as the sun sank beneath the western horizon. Then he jumped to the conclusion that the rising of the sun was responsible for well-being, growth, and strength; and that the falling, setting sun was responsible for tiredness, failing strength and death. Therefore, the old tooth was thrown towards the rising sun, but a P/gai aup or witch doctor would throw it towards the setting sun to produce an evil effect. A fright was something tangible, and Nama women still by palpation diagnose the presence of a lump, a crystallised fright that has settled in the stomach. They state too, that the woman's "life place" resides on the right side, and that when she is sickly it moves about.

From the details of this herbal lore it appears that the chief medical ailments treated by the Hottentots were pains in the stomach and fevers, classed together as "fires," and distinguished only by locality, flatulence as an entity, diarrhoea, and among the accidental injuries, burns. Several specific complaints had specific treatment. Kolben described the treatment of headache by shaving the head with a sharp knife, leaving furrows between the mounds of hair. If the cause was supposed to be a "wind in the head," then massage was applied to the nape of the neck; and snuff of "dooba," which smells of garlic (asafoetida) was used. A case occurred during 1923 in Namaqualand of scarification of the temples as treatment for madness. Old writers mention this as the means whereby pains were let out. Infantile convulsions must have given the old women much work. A favourite prescription for this complaint was, and still is, Stink kruit leaves, the dried kidney of the D/aie jackal, and the sea bean, whatever that may be. Of these a powder is made which is worked into a linen band (in old days, a strip of hide) and fastened round the neck of the small patient. Small doses are then given internally mixed with mother's milk. The treatment is continued for one moon.

Alternating periods of famine and feast upset many stomachs. When excess was recognised to be the cause of his discomfort, the Hottentot took the juice of aloes in warm broth. The leaves to-day are dried and chopped up as required.

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Massage.

757 755 Where pain was felt, fat was rubbed in. If this was unsuccessful, then the doctor performed passes over the part with his hands, and then let drop a piece of wood from the nose and asserted that it was out of the patient's flesh. (Campbell.) Plasters of fat were applied from a freshly killed animal, and motions made with the hands over the plaster, so that medicine was combined with magic. Should that fail, then incisions were made. Massage was, and still is, in common [841] use, and is called P/kouroe. When women are behind their time with menstruation a rolling movement of the hand on the stomach is the correct method of treatment, and presumably it was a loosening motion. For pains and sprains, punching, kneading, and rolling are employed. P/koo is the transference of heat from a fire to the part affected by the intermediation [842] of the hand, which is warmed and applied gently. In the case of the unfruitful woman, she is massaged downwards on the abdomen. If this does not produce the desired effect, then the P/gai aup may be consulted, and he may do the rubbing.

Surgery.

752 The Hottentots' knowledge of surgery was limited. They successfully reduced dislocations. The joint was rubbed briskly with fat and the limb then moved briskly up and down. For example, a dislocation of the right shoulder would be reduced by gripping the patient's hand as though about to shake, and then vigorously pulling him towards and then pushing him away from one. Campbell says that they tied splinters of wood around broken limbs and left them until the bone was firm again.

Amputation of a finger joint was common and possibly led to experiments upon larger limbs. Kolben states that the head of the joint of the finger was tied up with sinew, and then [278] cut through below. To the raw surface, leaves of myrrh and sweet herbs were applied and tied on. He suggests that this method was used for the removal of larger limbs, and a skeleton found near Garies showed that a limb might be removed or lost and the patient live for at least a while afterwards. Our old Nama woman stated that the "old people," when a leg was badly broken, amputated it through the knee joint after tying a thong tightly around the lower end of the thigh. It is common knowledge that the native is an expert at disjointing any animal. The operation of gelding animals, especially bull 232 calves, was in daily use and was performed by bruising the testicles between two stones. The monorchism, so frequently 142 referred to by early travellers when writing of the Hottentot, was doubtless the application of the same method to male babies with the intention of reducing the number of twins born —once again a sympathetic reason.

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Kolben describes the operation of bleeding. First a thong was tied around the limb, and the vein opened below it. When enough blood had been drawn off, the incision was closed with mutton fat and the leaf of some herb placed over it. Alexander says that they were fond of bleeding, and the backs and sides of many were thickly scored with the knife. They were not over-particular about having a horn for cupping, the mouth frequently being used for that purpose. 757

The Nama cupping horn, as still in use, is a carefully prepared tip of ox horn open at both ends, with the broader end carefully bevelled from within outwards. The smaller end is closed with a ball of soft worked resin, which is pierced by a long thorn. The horn is applied to the scarified skin and the operator sucks hard. When suction is well established he bites the resin and so closes the aperture. The horn is left in place until the required amount of blood has been withdrawn. An exactly similar mode of using a similar instrument occurs in India. [[71]]

Cupping is used for colics and pains in the stomach. The patient lies on his back and the horn is first applied dry, that is, over the unscarified surface of the skin, to produce insensibility. The numbed part is then scarified. If the pain moves to another area, the part is rubbed with hot fat and again cupped. If this fails, an infusion of herbs is given to drink. In the old days, cupping horns were carried to draw out the poison from arrow wounds, and also a little bottle or horn of oil with which to wash the injury, but scarification and suction applied by the mouth was also in favour. Scarification and cupping are also used for the relief of madness and epilepsy.

Preventive Medicine.

Preventive medicine was an important and extensive section of Hottentot medical lore and took the form of charms and incantations. When a child lost a milk tooth, he took the tooth, and standing facing the rising sun repeated the two lines:— 751

" P/gko c/gkoup Ba-ooe D/kooee
D/ghumba ma dae."

which may be translated, " Dassie, take my bone tooth and send me a stone tooth." The Dassie is the rock rabbit, so here there appears to be a double magical significance.

The remainder of the subject of charms, including those magic necklets to prevent attack by wild beasts or to prevent effect of witchcraft, can be considered correctly only in a separate article. But it is necessary to remember that there was no activity of Hottentot life which was not affected by signs, portents, charms or ritual, which he employed to foretell or warn of coming ill-luck, and which enabled him to prevent or remove the ill effects of them and of any other bad influence, whether induced by act of God or practice of witchcraft. 789

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Toxicology.

825 757 The snake stone has been a famous antidote in all countries. The South Africans imported them from India, but few farmers could afford to purchase this remedy because of the expense. Barrow examined specimens and pronounced them to be pieces of firm bone charred round the edges leaving a white speck in the centre. When thrown into water, a snake stone caused bubbles to rise and this test was a proof of genuineness. It adhered to the snake bite, sucked out the poison, and was cleansed by soaking in water which it turned blue. Country people believed that it was obtained from the head of a snake. The snake stone of the Hottentot is quite a different matter, 825 though it also is believed to be part of a snake. A young Richtersvelder gave this description: "I saw a snake's light. If you see it afar off it looks like a person's fire, but I know that there are no people there. Go nearer, and then it is seen that the light walks about. Then I keep away. I have heard that if a snake's hole be closed with earth that the snake then bites himself to death. Next day the snake stone is found in front of the hole where he dropped it when he went away."

Sam, two hundred miles south of the last informant, says that at night a twinkle is seen on the rocks, and that is a snake stone; and it is seen because the snake is away at the river. Then, to procure the snake stone it is necessary to keep a good look-out, and to approach cautiously with a handful of beast dung, which is to be thrown so that it puts out the light. Thereupon the absent snake becomes blind and cannot see, and can only creep aimlessly to and fro. Next day the dung is picked up and the snake stone, which is the snake's strength, taken away. He is ordinarily a strong-tempered fellow, but after losing his stone he becomes weak, and cannot sit up to bite. The stone is used by the Natives together with bush medicines for poisonous swellings. Probably it is one of the numerous quartz crystals, loose or embedded in the rocks, which occur in profusion all over Namaqualand, and that reflect light at evening time.

278 759 Jacob Klaas, whose father was a full-blooded Nama, is the Poison Doctor for the Northern portion of Namaqualand. He learned his profession from his father, who in his turn had been taught by his father. He states that a boy must be strong to begin with, that is, he must have a good constitution. His father made two small cuts above the elbow of each arm, and into them rubbed a small portion of the dried venom of the cobra and night adder. Two weeks later his father prepared a lump of venom that contained several varieties, and gave him a piece to hold upon his tongue until he felt "funny and shivery." This was repeated twice weekly. Then he was given a piece to swallow. The dose was increased daily until the size of a pin's head was reached. Though now about forty years old, Jacob still takes his daily dose. The only venom

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not used in this process is that of the puff adder, because his 759
father told him that it rots the flesh.

The treatment that this man adopts for bites of the cobra 752
is incisions over the bite; he then places a piece of venom in his mouth and proceeds to suck the wound. He also gives the patient a small dose of prepared venom to be swallowed, which he says, congeals the poison inside so that he vomits it out. Puff adder bites he treats similarly.

Jacob catches snakes by breaking their backs and so [224]
paralysing them; they must not be killed. The head is fixed 278
with a forked stick, after which the snake may be picked up 752
by the back of its neck. The sacs of poison are carefully dissected out, each intact with its fang, from beneath the eyes. The sacs are ligatured at the base of the fangs to prevent the escape of venom. They are then hung up to dry. They are not mixed. Jacob uses no head cloth, and therefore scrapes the greasy, sweated band of his old hat and mixes this with water to give to the patient. This internal dose is given only when it is seen that the poison "has got to the heart," and is given, as is the venom, to congeal the injected venom. Either the sweat or the venom will do, both have the same action. He also uses Bo Meester, and gives this drug internally for as long as the patient may be ill, and applies Black Klipsweet or Dassiepis plasters externally. One other old snake catcher gave me exactly the same information.

The gecko lizard, the D/ung D/ung, is by all, white and 825
black alike, credited with being deadly poisonous. The only 136
poisonous lizard has its habitat in Mexico; but Jacob dissects out some gland and uses it in the same manner as the venom sac of the snake.

Another Poison Doctor explained his immunity thus; after 278
eating poison the snakes smell the man, do not like him, and 752
run away from him, therefore, spittle and sweat are curative. (The Dutch used to give high prices for pieces of Poison Doctor head cloths.) Here, once again, the sympathy becomes apparent.

In a country that Nature has cursed with multitudes of snakes, spiders, and scorpions, cures and antidotes for their bites and stings naturally form a large section of the folk medicine. Kaboo, a potato-like root, sweet to taste, is used raw, in slices, applied wet to the wound to draw out the poison. Yellow Kafir wood, ground, is used as a poultice. This appears to have a certain caustic action. The crushed head of the snake may be applied as a poultice to snake bite. Bo Meester may be rubbed into scarifications over the bites. Powdered spider or tarantula is used as a poultice over their bites. In the case of scorpion sting the particular animal if possible is captured, its tail pulled off, also its nippers, the body is ground and applied as a paste. In each case of scorpion sting that the writer has treated, the body of the scorpion always accompanied the

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278 752 patient. On the spot where a snake has lived for many years, the Natives say, a slimy patch develops that is almost cement like. This is used as an antidote for all poisonous bites, and is also given to dying people.

Abstract of Hottentot Herbal.

278 In discussing the various herbs used by the Hottentot medicine man, the following plan has been adopted:—

The Nama name is first given for the purposes of reference, then, in some cases, reference by travellers or other observers, and when modern uses are discussed the Nama name (if known), the Afrikaanse name and the scientific name are given.

Medicines.

Kanna. Kanna is a Salsola, of which there are several species. Graevenbroeck mentions that it was used similarly to hemp, and that the leaves were roasted in ashes and used as food. Paterson states that a certain district around the Kromme River was called Channa by the Hottentots because of the quantity of the plant which grew there.

Namaquas in 1662 accepted presents from the Dutch, and in return gave fat-tailed sheep and Kanna, which the Commander pronounced to be similar to the Chinese Ginseng. The Cape root was scarce and was considered valuable, and possibly is the channa mentioned by the traveller Paterson in 1779. During the early days of the settlement at the Cape, a Hottentot would perform any task willingly if he knew that the reward was to be a piece of kanna. It would appear that certain of these 278 writers confuse the root ningin or kanna with kaawgoed, the 276 leaves of a Mesembryanthemum, because they described properties which are certainly those of the latter. It was chewed and retained in the mouth for a while, when their spirits would rise, eyes brighten, and faces take on a jovial air, and they would commence to dance. But if indulged in to excess it robbed them of their senses and they became intoxicated.

278 Kaawgoed, *Mesembryanthemum tortuosum*. Leaves chewed for toothache and pains in the stomach. Has a strong narcotic effect due to alkaloid, mesembrine. Will make a child sleep. Used to-day for sand in horses.

Slasi, *Mesembryanthemum Crystallinum*, Nama N/aboo or N/ngboop, is used for taking hair off skins, and is still in use among farmers.

[276] Karremoer, *Mesembryanthemum stellatum*. One of the beer making roots, a deliriant and intoxicant with an earlier stimulant action.

278 757 Krampsiekbosch, *Cotyledon Welchii* or *Lessertia annularis*. Stem is pounded and used for poultices on abscesses after spine and bark have been removed. When dry has somewhat the appearance of ginseng.

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Buchu barosma, Letolina. Nama Sab (Tyndale). P/nkaou (name given to writer). Two varieties known in Nama as D/nhora, D/khoasa or Haas buchu, and P/kabourie. Considered by Hottentot to possess great virtues in curing disorders, and rarer forms are valuable to the Native. In powder used for dusting, for fire and sunburns. Baby powder made of D/nhora kept in tortoise shell puff box, roasted with fat and dropped in ear for earache. Powder also mixed with C/ghoonsbi, an acacia thorn sucker, and then considered a high class powder. The second rate powder used for babies was mixed with ground acacia thorn bark, and is named O/kai. D/nhora Buku is roasted with oil and fat, mixed with mother's milk and dropped into the ear for earache. P/nkaou is rare and valuable, and a thimblefull is worth from a sheep to an ox. It is obtained in mountainous districts and when used is pounded and tied in a cloth over which hot water is poured. Is this a method due to exercise of economy?

P/thon danoep, or sweet honey, a sticky soft-leaved sweet tasting plant, is also used for powder making.

The thorn tree sucker was put to many uses. The Bushmen used its ashes to blacken his face. To-day an oil not unlike cajeput is expressed and used for rheumatic troubles.

Xghoria or Xhoua, which means "smells strong," is a plant so far not identified. The whole plant is ground up and strewed on dead bodies, and is also applied to the living body when it has an unpleasant odour. This powder is also used as a snuff to keep away the smell of the dead "so that it doesn't strike in."

Bitter Roots. Many roots are known to-day under the name of bitterbosch, or bitter wortle, that is, bitter bush or bitter root. The chief are the blue bush, *Royena pallens*, *Xysmalobium undulatum* (*Asclepias crispa*?) and the Sand-Bitter hood, a tall bush found in the mountains. These are so much used by the present white population that the Afrikaanse name has quite ousted the Nama one. The blue-bush root is also known as the black root, the wonderful emetic-purgative. These roots are powdered and boiled, and the decoction is used for pains in the stomach; if used for diarrhoea, then the stems of the plant are included. The liquor so prepared is greenish in colour and is exceedingly bitter, with a *Nux vomica* type of bitterness.

Daggra. Two species are recognised: wilde dagga, *Leonotis leonurus*; and klip dagga, *Leonotis ovatis*. Graevenbroeck mentions its use. The powdered leaves, he said, were made into a little cake no bigger than a Rijksdaler, a coin about the size of a modern shilling, which the Hottentots chewed, even as the Indians and Chinese chewed opium. In 1750 its use, mixed with tobacco introduced by the Europeans, is mentioned. A decoction of the roots is used for headaches and for bronchitis. An ointment made from raw fat and pulverised dagga

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278 leaves is used for pains in the eyes. Its growth for commerce
757 is now prohibited by law. It is still used with tobacco for
[276] smoking. A decoction of seeds boiled and allowed to stand is used for bronchitis and headaches.

Kraalbosch, D/kooi dabee, Kraal bosch, *Galenia africana*, is chewed for toothache in small quantities. If too much is used it blisters the mucous membrane of the mouth. This bush is now used in a mixture in decoction with Aister bosch for toothache and also for venereal disease.

Sages. Aromatic sage, Afrikaanse Salie. Rhodeblom, *Salvia africana* and *Salvia paniculata*. Geelblom or strand salie (sand salie), *Salvia aurea*. Decoction of leaves used for coughs and colds and also for women's troubles. Wittle blom. *Nuxia congesta*. Salie prout. Leaves resemble those of a sage. *Buddleia salvifolia*. *Tarchonanthus camphoratus*.

Stink sali, (small grey whitish leaves), dried leaves used in decoction for common colds and externally as a lotion for sores. Berg salie, or mountain sage, green or dried leaves in decoction for coughs and colds, is evidently an expectorant, as it is stated it makes the cough ripe. Also used in decoction for washing sores. To-day these salies are used in combination with Katakruie and plein hout and vaal bosch for fevers, such as measles.

Wild olives are used to make diaphoretic mixtures, or sweating draughts. One species, named in Nama, P/koem, is used in decoction of leaves for dropsy, flatulence, and pains in the stomach, as a lotion for sores, and also the leaves are used as a plaster. The most prized is the sand olein houd, the Nama D/koubi, a decoction of the leaves of which is administered in any cold or fever, from a common cold to typhoid.

Klein koorts bosch, little fever bush, *Grassula lycopodioides* L. is used in decoction as a diaphoretic.

[844] Taaibosch, L/ or P/guaru, *Rhus* sp. or *Rhus undulata* Jacq. The leaves of this plant are boiled and the liquor given for the troubles which arise after parturition. Of the two species of bush, long and short, the latter is preferred.

Vogelent, *Viscum capense* Lin. Nama Aie L/ kwoe, a Taaibosch parasite, is used as an emmenagogue. Barend uses it for amenorrhea, mixed with P/au, wild celery. By the Cape Boers it is used for epilepsy, chorea, and diarrhoea.

757 L/aiser, a bush not identified, is used in decoction for puer-
844 peral fever. It is strongly purgative, and as the Native doctor
278 says: "works the fire out of the stomach." It is never used for the young, but only for adult women. One informant states particularly it is used, when the patient is delirious, to "work it out."

Faierrank, Nautsi amma (Nama), a red tipped faier rank, *Mesembrianthemum edule* or *acinaciforme*, is used for delayed labour, or retained after-birth. It is stamped and given as a pulp.

1 [i.e. Dagga leaves — Analyst]

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[847]

Haakiesdoorn, P/ahbi, is also an emmenagogue.

P/ngoona, a thorn bush, *Sarcocaulon* sp., pounded whole and boiled, is a successful abortifacient according to many. Barend says that it is exceedingly good, but that he uses it only for parturient troubles in sheep. Klip melk bosch, *Euphorbia restituta*, given for tedious labours. When the treatment is continued for two or three days it "helps and strengthens."

Roode rabassam. Pappe, in his "*Flora Capensis*," mentions two Pelargoniums that are used medicinally in the Cape and Namaqualand, *Pelargonium antidysentericum*, in Nama D/kanie, which is boiled in milk and used as an astringent, and *P. anceps*, known to the Coloured and Afrikanders as *Roode rabassam* and used by the Cape Malays to produce abortion or for helping on a confinement. In Namaqualand this is known as rabass, which appears to be the original Nama name for it, or a corruption. The Afrikander names it rooi wortle or rooi storrm. It is used for anaemias and weaknesses and repeated doses are given during fevers. The Boer uses it boiled or "set op brandywijn." Baviaan's oor, Baboon's ear, Bol (Nama), *Eriospermum latifolium*, a red tuber, rasped up raw, used as a cold poultice on bruises and cuts, is considered good. The colour in each case appears to have been the chief attraction.

[847]

Kalkoen blom, or turkey flower, *Sutherlandia fructescens*, was used in decoction for washing wounds and given as drink for fevers. To-day it is used for consumption, chicken pox, etc. Rooi rainkie leaves, red again, are used as a poultice when thorns have pierced the foot, a common occurrence in a country covered with *Acacia horrida*.

Stinkbosch, *Nymania capensis* was, and is, given for convulsions. Stink bosch, Ou meide's bosch, or Old Woman's bush, P/kabou, *Boscia foetida*, is possibly used as an emmenagogue, but mainly, in so far as I can gather, as a decoction for pains in the back. There are a large number of aromatic bushes in the African veld, and many of these, in fact most, are in use, or have at some time past been used medicinally.

Rosemary, Nama name not identified, *Eriocephalus umbellatatus*, is used in decoction for pain in the stomach.

Stinkkruit, is used in decoction for stomach pains, in cases of scorpion sting, pounded, moistened and applied cold as a plaster.

D/khammae or P/tkamma, "something that grows near water," aromatic thyme, used as a tea, as a diaphoretic.

The common fire bush, L/naroo, so named because of its domestic use, combines the characteristics of aroma with redness of its small thick, juicy, finger-like leaves, which are chewed for pain in the stomach.

Kattendoorn, or cat thorn, D/nuance, and the use of its roots in decoction in wasting diseases, has already been mentioned. It is probably a modern application of the ancient principles of sympathetic medicine.

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Quickgrass, P/arre, which has jointed roots of tremendous length, is used in decoction for coughs.

Baboon rope, P/nyra sooriep, a species of liana, is burned and the ash sprinkled on ringworms. Several of the modern herbalists use it in decoction for boils, administered internally, as also they use the smaller climber, bakker bosch, *Cynanchum capense*, Thun. *Passerina filiformis*, P/tou, which when lighted disappears in a blaze of flame, whence its usefulness to the baker after whom it is named, is used in decoction for shooting pains.

Suitduizel, *Berkheyra* sp. a holly-like little bush about three feet high that grows near rivers and springs, is used in decoction for the same ailment. Sam uses it in powder as a plaster for burns and boils.

Candle bush, *Sarcocaula Burmanse*, a smaller variety *Petersonii*, is gathered, pounded fine, and used as an astringent for diarrhoea. Because of its laborious method of preparation it is named D/nou D/nou, which Sam translates as "work-work," but which is evidently an onomatopoetic word representing the sound of the stamping. The root is ground fine and used as a poultice, which is peppery and acts like a mustard plaster.

Gums and resins are used to only a small extent.

[824 262]

Heyra, the exudation of the acacia tree, is used as a food, and when boiled with fat as a salve for whitlows and boils. Possibly the ease with which the tree exudes this substance was the starting point of this use.

Scaap rapayce, D/ta dou, a resin greener than the others, is eaten by animals, but not used much by man.

D/Goonu, the resin of several species of Euryops, is gathered in the sands of Bushmanland where, having dropped from the stems of the bushes, it forms black concretions beneath; this is the reason that it is thought most of. It is boiled and the bitter decoction used in fevers. The red resin obtained from the woody parts of the same bush is also used. The stems of this plant when old are reddish and inflammable, even in wet weather.

PURGATIVES.

Purgatives are in great request. P/gameroo, a whitish tuber with flat, green leaves not unlike those of the pumpkin, is cut and boiled, and the liquor is used as emetic and purgative, in stomach complaints.

Kraaibosch, D/nareeree; *Royena hirsuta* L.; wild gentian, known as the Ambiser bosch, or piles bush, *Chiroma baccijeca*, of the decoction of which two mouthfuls is an efficient dose, have a rapid effect. It is also used in decoction for boils.

SNUFFS.

As well as snuffs to drive out the infection of death there were snuffs that cured headaches.

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White Kafir-wood. A bush with a red flower, unidentified, which grows around the Orange River, powdered fine, is snuffed for flatulence, and is a very pungent snuff. Also used in decoction for the same purpose—slightly bitter. 278 757

Witte vergeit, a white chicory-like root, is powdered and used by some as a plaster, by others as a snuff. Barend declares that this is " first class " for headaches. Here, again, the principle is that of " driving out " by means of an explosive sneeze.

POULTICES.

Plasters and poultices are of common use to-day, and it appears that a soft hot application, whether cow-dung, the inside of a goat disembowelled alive to prevent loss of heat, or a preparation of herbs, was a favourite remedy with the Hottentots. The bulb of the C/koos P/naboo, veldschoon blaar or field shoes leaf, a large soft sole-like leaf is warmed, smeared with fat and applied to any swelling. P/nums ghana has been mentioned. D/nou D/nou was also used as a plaster, and this particular preparation is peppery, and has the same action as a mustard plaster.

The large number of bushes contained in the Hottentot Pharmacopoeia is the reason of certain seemingly filthy remedies being used. The modern goat-dung poultice is an animal preparation of immemorial repute, a preparation, too, warm and ready to hand of selected bush leaves. What then could be better to apply to a sore stomach? Such poultices have been applied by white people for pneumonia, appendicitis, peritonitis, and innumerable other complaints. For who knows more concerning the medicinal herbs of a country than its aborigine? And where could finer ground, ready to hand preparation be obtained than from the stomach of a goat or sheep? The stomach of the porcupine is dried and portions infused as required. Its action is diaphoretic. One man said that as long as he had that medicine he would never need any white or black doctor's help. Again the argument is that the porcupine eats so many " Bush things and strong things " that his stomach contents must be very good medicine. [825]

ANIMAL PRODUCTS.

L/am uru. The most famous animal product, one that figures even in the price lists of the modern wholesale chemists, is dassiepis, L/am uru, or D/gaous, the inspissated urine and faeces of the rock rabbit, gathered from the clefts and crannies inhabited by them. Boiled and strained the liquor is given in dry confinements, during parturition generally, and for irregularities of menstruation. In large doses it is believed to be the perfect abortifacient. Deposits of Dassiepis acted upon by the atmosphere, which gradually removes all the organic matter, form a dark pitch-like mass, the dassiepis of commerce, which 278 757 825 [844-847]

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278 757 825 gradually changes into white potassium nitrate. The black intermediate product is called in Afrikaanse zwart bo meester, big black master, and the final product purified by air, bo meester, or grand big master, is potassium nitrate; it is the "big boss" of all medicines, dassiepis being given internally in decoction or infusion for all sorts of poisoning of whatever origin, and it is rubbed into scarified snake bites and scorpion stings. It is also used in such minor complaints as stiffness of the back and pains in the stomach.

278 757 [844 847] Klipsweet is boiled, strained and given as a tea in insufficient flow of waters during parturition, and also for unhealthy menstruation. In large doses it is used as an abortifacient, in smaller doses for pains in the back. To-day it is considered an ideal medicine for children.

[826] Nasal mucus is an old Hottentot remedy, a handy one and probably the first ever used, for burns. The cast snake skin is burned and the powder used for the same complaint. The ease with which the snake leaves its old skin and its similarity to the thin cuticle covering a blister are probably the reason of its use.

Hyaena dung is precious, and in powder is given to children for convulsions. Among its modern uses is that of an insufflative powder in cases of diphtheria. So strong is the faith in this remedy that no man, whatever be his colour, will see that white patch of faeces without pausing to pick it up.

757 171 Skins drawn warm off the living animal were used as an application for any severe pain. The use of such remedies has been world wide. It is mentioned by Miss Durham in "Man," 1913. 82. among some Balkan remedies, and the explanation for the use of warm sheep skin is similar to the Hottentot's explanation of his use of the porcupine's stomach—that the animal eats all sorts of herbs and that by this remedy the mixture thereof is enabled to soak into the patient.

752 278 C/ngama, a small greenish lizard about four inches long, is believed by the Native to be very poisonous. It is quick in movement and is called by the Nama, who kill it by thrown stones, the footed snake. The body is dried and powdered, and this is rubbed into scarifications over snake bites.

278 757 The Kanker beeste, or cancer beetle, is a small red and black flying insect which appears in decayed wood in spring. It is rubbed to pieces on warts—when the wart is expected to rot or to fly away. The more modern-minded Barend uses Euphorbia milk for this purpose, but goes a step further with the beetle, for he applies it to cancers.

PRESCRIPTIONS.

An old and much praised remedy is oubae C/namop, which consists of burned and powdered ostrich egg shells mixed with tail fat of sheep or goat. This is rubbed into the chest of

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children affected with snuffles or coryza. In some cases it is applied over the whole body. The name of the ostrich egg shell is aboo P/nooroo.

Many bushes have interesting non-medical uses. Guaap, *Stapelia filifera*, a cucumber-like growth, is used as a thirst quencher; Vaarkies blaar is used after the eating of the flesh of animals that have died of anthrax, not as the Kafirs use certain shrubs to prevent the disease, but as an application to the boils that subsequently appear. Yet in 1923 several Bastards in Bushmanland died from the effects of eating anthrax-infected meat. L/kau D/han, the fleisch-bosch or meat bush, has hard twigs with thick fleshy leaves, and is so named by the Dutch because the Hottentots used it as a support for meat after slaughtering to keep it off the sand, the reason for the choice of this particular bush being that, though in contact with the meat, it did not taint it. The P/abee, or fluities-bosch, the flute bush, was stripped of its bark to make a species of pipes of Pan, when no reeds were obtainable. It is never used now, and only the name survives to keep alive the memory of the Hottentot reed dances.